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# SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Senator María Elena Durazo, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

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**Bill No:** AB 2224  
**Author:** Hadwick  
**Version:** 5/21/26

**Hearing Date:** 6/17/26  
**Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Peterson

## *COUNTY RECORDERS: FEES*

*Makes various changes to recording fees and requires county recorders to implement an electronic recording system by January 1, 2028.*

### **Background**

County boards of supervisors can levy authorized fees or charges in amounts reasonably necessary to recover the costs of providing products or services or the cost of enforcing regulations (AB 151, Hannigan, 1983). The fees or charges may reflect the average cost of providing products or services or enforcing regulations, plus limited indirect costs.

County recorders are responsible for examining and recording all documents dealing with the ownership of land in counties. These documents include payments of taxes or fees, filings of fictitious business names, deeds, mortgage documents, easements, power of attorney documents, liens, and any documents that affect the ownership of any given property. Other documents include deeds of trust, court decrees, and documents affecting title to real property; commercial code filings; subdivision maps; vital statistics such as births, deaths, and marriages; and other items.

Existing law allows county recorders to charge a filing fee for recording and indexing every instrument, paper, or notice required or permitted by law to be recorded. From 1985 (SB 2277, McCorquodale, 1984) to 2009, the maximum charge was \$4 for the recording of the first page and \$3 for each additional page. In 2009, SB 676 (Wolk) increased the maximum charge for the recording of the first page of a document from \$4 to \$10, where it remains today. One dollar of each \$3 dollar fee for an additional page must go into the county general fund. In addition, recorders can also collect a \$1 fee on the first and each additional page if they use it solely to support, maintain, improve, and provide for the full operation for modernized creation, retention, and retrieval of information in each county's system of recorded documents.

Since 1980, recorders have been able to charge an additional \$1 fee for filing every instrument, paper, or notice for record in order to defray the cost of converting the recorder's document storage system to microfilm (AB 3332, Filante, 1980). All 58 counties currently impose the \$1 fee. In 2019, AB 212 (Bonta) expanded the uses of that fee to over county recorder archive programs and the preservation of recorded documents in electronic media or in a cloud computing storage service. AB 212's provisions sunset on January 1, 2026.

A recorder of any county may, in lieu of a written paper, accept for recording digitized images, digital images, or both, of a recordable instrument, subject to specified conditions (AB 3264, Frazee, 1988). The Electronic Recording Delivery Act (AB 578, Leno, 2004) authorizes the

digitized electronic delivery, recording, and return of specified types of instruments submitted by title insurers, underwritten title companies, institutional lenders, and government entities through an electronic record delivery system (ERDS) upon approval by the county board of supervisors and certification by the Attorney General. The Act requires the State Attorney General, in consultation with interested parties, to adopt regulations for the review, approval, and oversight of electronic recording delivery systems. AB 2143 (Irwin, 2016) expands, until January 1, 2027, the scope of the state law that allows for the digitized electronic delivery, recording, and return of some types of recordable instruments.

The County Recorders Association of California wants to increase overall recording fees to reflect updated costs, delete outdated fees, and shift more counties towards electronic recording.

### **Proposed Law**

Assembly Bill 2224 makes various changes to recording fees and requires county recorders to implement an electronic recording system by January 1, 2028. Specifically, AB 2224:

- Increases the recording fee for the first page from \$10 to \$15;
- Increases the fee for additional pages from \$3 to \$4;
- Repeals the additional \$1 per-page fee for recording documents if the printing on printed forms is spaced more than nine lines per vertical inch or more than 22 characters and spaces per inch measured horizontally for not less than three inches in one sentence;
- Repeals the additional \$3 per-page fee for pages that do not conform to 8.5x 11 inch paper size;
- Repeals the requirement that \$1 of each \$3 fee for each additional page must be deposited in the county general fund; and
- Repeals the additional \$1 per indexing fees for records that require additional indexing work.

AB 2224 prohibits fee amounts from exceeding the reasonable costs of the county recorder's office for providing these services. It also requires that fees collected exclusively go towards the county recorder's office and requires the recorder to provide access to a true copy of the public record for each instrument, paper, or notice, recorded in the office of the recorder, to facilitate public inspection. AB 2224 removes the January 1, 2027, sunset on provisions of the Electronic Recording Delivery Act that allow for the digitized electronic delivery of specified records and expands the ability of the county recorder to include in their ERDS a secure method of receiving electronic records to any record.

The measure makes findings and declarations to further its intent.

### **Comments**

1. Purpose of the bill. According to the author, "California county recorder's offices are funded via fees on recorded documents. However, their costs have risen while fees have not been increased since 2011—resulting in growing budget shortages. Assembly Bill 2224 creates a more straightforward fee system for consumers and helps recorders recuperate their rising costs while requiring them to offer digital recording services."

2. Another bite at the apple. Recorders have articulated the need for fee reform for years. Most recently, they asked the Legislature to increase recording fees in AB 1430 (Bennett, 2025), which would have increased the recording and indexing fee to \$15 for recording the first page and \$4 for recording each additional page at the county recorder’s office. The Governor vetoed AB 1430 with the following message:

“I am returning Assembly Bill 1430 without my signature.

“This bill would increase county recording base fees and make various changes to the allocation of these fees. Specifically, this bill would increase the record and indexing fee to \$15 for the first page, and \$4 for each additional page. For documents dealing with the ownership of land in counties - including payments of taxes or fees, deeds, mortgage documents, easements - and any documents that affect the ownership of any given property, this bill would increase the recorder fee from \$1 to \$3 for each additional page.

“Californians realizing the dream of property ownership rely on recorder offices to handle important documents with care, making these offices critical points of interaction between residents and their government. I appreciate the author's intent to improve the efficiency of California's land title system, for both the public and county recorders, to ensure expeditious processing of real property records. However, raising these fees on Californians will disincentivize efforts to think innovatively about how to deliver recording services at a lower cost, faster, and with better customer service. I encourage the author and counties to consider ways to achieve that goal without solely relying on fee increases.

For this reason, I cannot sign this bill.”

AB 2224 takes another stab at the issue, but balances the same fee increases as AB 1430 proposed with deleting unnecessary fees due to technological advancements, offsetting some of the cost burden for these increased fees. Additionally, it requires county recorders to implement e-recording, which is supposed to increase the efficiency of their operations.

3. Mandate. The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local governments for the costs of new or expanded state mandated local programs. Because AB 2224 adds to the duties of local officials, Legislative Counsel says the bill imposes a new state mandate. AB 2224 disclaims the state’s responsibility for providing reimbursement by citing local governments’ authority to charge for the costs of implementing the bill’s provisions.

**Assembly Actions**

Assembly Committee on Local Government:	9-0
Assembly Committee on Appropriations:	14-0
Assembly Floor:	72-0

**Support and Opposition** (6/12/2026)

Support: County Recorders Association of California (sponsor)  
 Agenthome  
 Coalition for Improving Court Access

Corinthian Title Company  
County of Contra Costa  
County of Riverside  
Fidelity National Title Company  
Westcor Land Title Insurance Company  
Wfg National Title Company

Opposition: None Submitted

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